

STRATEGIC PLAN

2014 – 2019



WE BELIEVE

At Camp Menesetung, we believe that through good stewardship our camping experience provides recreation and learning in an outdoor setting to enhance the spiritual development of all.

Approved April 11, 2015

www.campmenesetung.ca

During the summer of 2014, the Board of Director's formed a committee to work on developing a Strategic Plan for the Camp. A Strategic Analysis was undertaken to take an in-depth look at all the factors likely to have the greatest impact on the future of Camp Menesetung. During this analysis, critical issues facing the camp were identified. This analysis forms the basis for decisions affecting the future of Camp Menesetung.

OUR MISSION

At Camp Menesetung, we believe that through good stewardship our camping experience provides recreation and learning in an outdoor setting to enhance the spiritual development of all.

OUR HISTORY

Goderich Summer School met for a week each July in Goderich every year beginning in 1921. Edward Lawson was one of the 100 people who attended. On October 1, 1933 he sold what is currently the present camp property for \$2160 as a part of a combined purchase of land by Huron Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, and a group of ministers and lay people in the church. The 15 lakefront lots were purchased by the ministers and cottages were built. By the summer of 1935 some buildings had been erected on the camp property, and training and inspirational sessions occurred throughout the summer for children and young people, families and single adults.

There was a close relationship between the cottagers and the camp. Many were actively involved with various camp activities, including program leadership, campfire, chapel services, kitchen help, and sharing water resources.

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Gradually the property was developed further, with permanent structures for sleeping quarters and a recreational hall. The original outdoor chapel was replaced in 1953 when the church building from Leeburn was moved on site. The present dining hall was constructed in 1964 to replace the original, which is currently used as a craft hall. The in ground swimming pool was also built in 1964, eliminating the use of the waterfront for swimming. A house for the Director was built in 1974. After the Walkerton water fiasco a pump house was built in 2001, a chlorination system was installed, and the camp no longer supplied water to the cottages. In 2002 a new septic system was installed to replace the 5 existing septic systems which were all failing.

Goderich Summer School was incorporated on April 8, 1947. The name was changed to Camp Menesetung, meaning 'Laughing Waters' in 1968. The camp is managed by a Board of Directors. Staff is hired and trained by the Director. Youth camps are offered in July and August. The facilities are available for rental during May, June, September, and October. The camp is accredited by the Ontario Camping Association, and in July, 2004 was 1 of only 4 United Church Camps, Canada-wide, to achieve 100% accreditation on all mandatory and recommended guidelines for United Church Accreditation. A partnership with Reach For The Rainbow was established in 2005.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Strengths and Weaknesses of Camp Menesetung (Internal)

The following Strengths were identified:

- ✓ Camp Menesetung is located on a beautiful Lake Huron property just north of Goderich
- ✓ Our infrastructure is well maintained
- ✓ We offer a diverse selection of accommodation facilities
- ✓ Our “Adopt-A-Cabin” program assists us in offering great facilities
- ✓ We offer a variety of camp programming at reasonable pricing
- ✓ We are proud of our ability to address dietary requests to assist in assuring a safe, allergy free environment
- ✓ We offer a broad faith-based experience to all
- ✓ We have the ability to offer bursaries to those families in need

The following Weaknesses were identified:

- ✓ Finding younger Board members with fresh ideas is challenging
- ✓ Technology, such as “On-line Registration”, is not offered
- ✓ Some buildings are in need of replacement
- ✓ Addressing accessibility issues has not been a priority
- ✓ Most summer camp sessions have vacancies.
- ✓ Off-season use is very low
- ✓ An alumni program is non-existent
- ✓ Low Financial Reserves

Opportunities and Threats Facing Camp Menesetung (External)

The following Opportunities were identified:

- ✓ We are located on the West Coast of Ontario at the gateway to cottage country
- ✓ We have a loyal following of families
- ✓ We have the support of the Ontario Camping Association and the United Church of Canada through their accreditation processes
- ✓ We have a fairly local youth population to fulfill our staffing need
- ✓ We are able to offer Day Camp to our local communities to buffer our occupancy rates
- ✓ With a Strategic Plan in place, we are able to apply to funding possibilities with confidence

The following Threats Facing Camp Menesetung were identified:

- ✓ We are surrounded by at least 6 Summer Camps within a 50 km range
- ✓ Getting involvement from local school boards for off-season programs is a hard task
- ✓ Local rural economy dictates the affordability of camp
- ✓ Need to update facilities to satisfy updated government regulations
- ✓ Potential renters looking for facilities that meet their particular needs
- ✓ Retention of key staff at affordable rates
- ✓ Expense of obtaining technological needs in rural area
- ✓ Can we meet a balance of Day Camp and Residential Camp to enable them to co-exist
- ✓ Volunteering has become non-existent in many individual lives
- ✓ Local economy does not encourage young families to stay in the area

Strategic Analysis Summary

1. Some buildings are in need of renovation or replacement. (Internal Issue)

Causes: Bunk house / Craft Hall is 80 years old and shows it's age. The Staff / Washroom / Health building is of similar age and is in need of updating. The new Accessibility Act requires us to work towards assuring our facilities are accessible to all.

Conclusion: We have a small Capital Fund but would need to fundraise dollars to provide funds for renovation or replacements. Ongoing search for grant sources needs to occur. Municipal codes would probably dictate what or where we could build.

2. Growth of our camper population. (Internal and external issue)

Causes: We live in a rural area hit by economic slowdowns. Recent years have seen many jobs disappear. Raising our fee structure could be very difficult for some of our families. Being able to offer our off season users some of our facilities is limited due to lack of trained staff who have returned to school.

Conclusion: Keeping our fees as reasonable as possible is of greatest importance. We need to attract more campers in the summer when we already have the staff. Program changes or additions may attract new campers. We also need to grow our off season rentals when we don't necessarily require program staff. Promotion of off season rentals is a necessity.

3. We are behind in technology. (Internal issue)

Causes: Many camps use on-line registration today. People are beginning to expect to be able to register and pay on-line. Expense of on-line registration causes us to question whether this is reasonable to look at for the size of our enrollment. We may be limited by rural availability of reliable, reasonably priced internet.

Conclusions: Providing on-line registration and payment may be advantageous to many of our campers. Administration of our registrations and retention of our files would become digital and probably easier and more efficient for program planning and development of an alumni program.

4. Low financial reserves prohibit upgrades (Internal issue)

Causes: Competition for fundraised dollars spreads potential funds amongst many groups. Board members who do volunteer to help fundraise reach the point of near burnout. We lack the expertise to locate and secure grant money. Often, being affiliated with a religious organization is detrimental when seeking grant applications.

Conclusions: Finding a volunteer who can establish Fund Development to meet our future needs in order to follow our Strategic Plan is paramount. This person would seek and secure grants, grow community partnerships and establish an Alumni Program. We must expand our volunteer base with younger members who can bring fresh ideas and energy as existing volunteers begin to burn out and leave.

STRATEGY FORMULATION

Critical Issues	Key Strategic Areas
Building Upgrades	Fund Development Volunteer Development
Use of Facilities	Public Relations Program Development
Technology	Fund Development
Low Financial Reserves	Fund Development Public Relations Develop Community Partnerships Volunteer Development

1. Fund Development is crucial to the future of Camp Menesetung. If we are to provide the upgraded facilities that will provide camp for generations to come, we need to learn how to fundraise. In order to offer an on-line registration system, as is becoming more expected today, we will need to invest in technology. We need the financial support of our local community as well as our Huron Perth Presbytery community. If we are to serve our community, we need to have our community involved.
2. Public Relations is an area which should be attended to year round. We have a presence on the internet through our website and Facebook. Our advertising reaches the local community through newspaper and radio. We have contact with some potential campers through our presbytery. Getting our name out is important in maintaining enrollment. Increasing our Public Relations efforts may be costly but could be an important factor in increasing enrollment and attracting new volunteers. An Alumni Program would assist greatly in public relations.

3. Program Development tends to be the responsibility of the Director of Camp Menesetung. Staff is hired basically for the months of July and August. However, the Director is hired for an extended period for the development of the program, hiring of staff and promotion of the camp. The Assistant Director is also hired for June to help develop the program. The camping season is extended in May and June by being able to offer trained staff for rental groups. However, we are unable to offer program, to Fall rental groups, other than food service. We hesitate to change our basic summer program in case we end up spreading the same enrollment over an extended season.
4. Developing and maintaining a Volunteer Program is essential to keeping Camp Menesetung operating. The Board consists of volunteers who dedicate countless hours to the maintenance of the property, fundraising, procuring a Director and general operation of the camp. Our Adopt A Cabin program is the main reason our campers are guaranteed well maintained, comfortable cabins. Volunteers are the backbone of Camp Menesetung.
5. Community Partnerships are important to Camp Menesetung in many ways. Our community of churches helps to provide the enrollment in our camps and the volunteers to maintain our camp. Service clubs can provide donations and be a source for grants. Workplace Unions and Associations can be a source for fundraising. Grants and other financial opportunities are available if you can find them. A partnership with our Alumni, who have experienced camp life and may want to help preserve the camp for the future, could be very opportunistic.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

1. To assure the existence of Camp Menesetung for future generations to experience, we must put energy into Fund Development to be able to provide funds for renovation or replacements of facilities.
2. To maintain and hopefully increase our current enrollment and usage at Camp Menesetung, we should reach out to and engage our communities.
3. To expand our program and extend our camping season, we should make more use of our staff during May and June.
4. To maintain our facilities at the level our families have come to expect, we need to expand our Volunteer Program at every opportunity.
5. To encourage community involvement in Camp Menesetung, we need to reach out to the local and church communities as well as our alumni, who have been a big part of Camp Menesetung.

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

1. Create a Fund Development Committee through finding a volunteer experienced in securing funds through fundraising and grant applications.
2. Expand our rentals in May and June.
3. Develop an Alumni Program.